

BULGARIAN FOLKSONGS

CHOSEN AND TRANSLATED
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The Bulgarian Folksong is no fossil — a living growth. It reflects, along with fragments of past history and extinct religions the everyday life of thousands of villages. Nor are the oldest versions of the songs always the best; they may be longer and none the better for that. While some die out, others take their place; the new ones tell us, not of kings and heroes, but of a workaday world, good luck and bad, love, quarrels and death in such an intimate way, sometimes humourous, sometimes tender but always terse and vivid, that only the folklorist has time to regret King Marko and his inordinate draughts of wine or Gruitsa and the other four children who at the age of three fight and defeat all comers.

The following translations keep as faithfully, not to say as baldly, as possible to the originals. There are no rimes, so that one great difficulty of translators is avoided. The common speech is used so that ornamental archaisms of the youth and maiden type are out of place. Nothing has been added and if there is any shortening beyond that of some exuberant verbal repetitions it is because English is shorter than Bulgarian. The rhythm of the originals is kept, with this proviso, that whereas it is very free and various, the translation based on the prevailing rhythm, tries to keep to it, lest it offend English ears.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Bulgarian Folksong we cannot render here — its tune, wild

and mournful, in a scale neither pure minor nor major but partaking of both. Its time too is strange; 5/4 and 7/4 are usual, and irregular measures much commoner than in Western Europe. The tunes are short, with many repeats. Simple major and minor tunes in jogtrot rhythms may also be heard but are not frequent or characteristic.

The following songs have been chosen as representing main types, beginning with the ballads. These, even more frequently than our own, have to do with supernatural creatures, *samovili* forest fairies (p. 13), *rous-salki* water nixes, and dragons (p. 11, 13). This is only natural for they continue to be real to the uneducated, who in casual conversation will tell you „My godmother's daughter did not wish to be married because a dragon fell in love with her; but her mother insisted and on the third night of the wedding she was found strangled.“ Or „My neighbour's wife was in love with a dragon: in *mufti* he looked very well and he used to do her shopping for her.“ The dragon behaves in many ways like other people, he speaks, rides horses, fetches wood for the fire. Yet we hear of his scales, his wings, his flames and of how he crawls on his belly. Perhaps he changes his shape.

The Plague (p. 21) is a real figure like a woman, dark and dreadful with tangled hair. The Sun (p. 22) must have been one of the chief gods of the Bulgarians in old times, so many songs about him and his doings with mortals remain. His horses play an important part, so does his mother.

Many are the legends of saints such as the Christmas

carol on p. 23. They are sung by waits from house to house on the day of the appropriate saint.

On p. 24 is the only representative of the great cycle of Marko Kralivitch for which room could be found.

On pp. 31—37 are songs of the *haiduti* or insurgents, both awkward words to deal with in metre; „Robber“ and „Brigand“ though unfair to these largely political outlaws are more intelligible than the one and more euphonious than the other.

From p. 37 on we have to do with personifications, which in Bulgaria are carried much further than in Western Europe. Not only does the Nightingale constantly speak in love songs and the Horse (p. 38), the Ram (p. 39), Frog (p. 39) Crayfish (p. 40) and Fox (p. 41) talk. We are used to that in stories and to some extent in songs; but here plants quarrel (p. 42) or congratulate each other (p. 42). Sun, Moon and Stars converse (p. 43). Mountains complain (p. 44) or excuse themselves (p. 45.) Rivers (p. 45) and even a nameless stream in the Rhodopes (p. 47) are also living characters with personalities.

The remaining songs are of everyday life, of gay and irresponsible youth (pp. 47—52) of love and marriage (pp. 52—65). Then come a number about the Family, for in Bulgaria family ties are unusually strong. They begin with the poignant lament for a son (p. 65). Mother and child appear in a natural but unamiable relationship on p. 66; mother and daughter quarrelling but much attached (p. 67). How different is the daughter-in-law (p. 68)! this relationship in the songs is never very cordial, but very tender throughout them all is that of brother and sister (p. 69). Aunts appear as help in time of difficulty (pp. 70—71).

Then begin the songs treating of occupations: shepherding (pp. 71—72), farming (pp. 73—75). Tailoring (p. 76) was one of the migrant trades along with building and gardening. The builders of Trun and other poor districts leave home in April working in groups all summer and return when the frost stops their work. So do the gardeners who grow vegetables as far afield as Dresden and Odessa. The shepherds too migrate to warmer pastures in Winter after a Summer on the heights.

On the professions follow the relaxations, *sedianki* (p. 78) parties on Autumn evenings when all gather round a bonfire to clean maize cobs or do other work while songs are sung and stories told.

Flowers and gardening (pp. 79—84) amount to a passion especially among the women. Drawn from the life is a Lazar carol

(Sbornik IV 15)

Stoyanchitsa, Stoyanchitsa
Where did you get the flower from?
„They sent it me from Tsarigrad (Constantinople)
That I might plant it out and sing
'Grow little flower, grow up grow tall
Until the feast of Lazarus
On Lazar's Day I'll gather you
And fasten you upon my head
And all the girls will want to know
Where 'twas I got the flower from'."

So no wonder the girl (p. 80) is vexed with her lover who must have passed through Constantinople and yet brought nothing for her garden.

The two relaxations of the Bulgarian peasant woman, laborious ones too and the better loved for that labour, are her flowergarden and her embroideries. These two loves she combines by working beautiful patterns of lilies, roses, iris, carnations and hollyhocks, apples and pomegranates, in gorgeous, unnaturalistic colours on the sleeves and bottom of her shirt, on her apron and household linen. How elaborate these embroideries are is shewn (with some exaggeration) on p. 84.

At the end we have fanciful poems (pp. 86—88) representative of quite a large class in which fancy is allowed to skip in a bewildering way — as the French have it „from a cock to a donkey“. But how gracefully it is done.

Bulgarian collections often classify songs less by subject than by the occasion on which they are sung. Carols are sung chiefly at Christmas, in the early Spring at St Lazarus and Blagovets, at Easter and on St George's Day (May 6th). For each occasion there are many, for they have to be suited to the person to whom they are sung. In this collection is a Christmas carol for the mother of a family (p. 23), Lazarus carols, (pp. 65 and 76), the former for a married Turk, the latter for a tailor.

On p. 71 is a song to be sung in Lent, when dancing is not allowed and a more sedate form of amusement takes its place on Sunday afternoons. There are Dancing Songs (e.g. p. 48) plenty of Reaper's Songs (e.g. p. 75), many and various Wedding Songs for all stages of that

long and complicated ceremony (the second on p. 85, p. 87, p. 77) others for Christenings, dinners and all sorts of occasions.

It is interesting to notice the cases of kinship between English and Bulgarian Ballads. Ours on p. 15 corresponds to the Suffolk Miracle (Child's Ballads № 272), p. 26 to Willie's Lykewake (ib. 25) and p. 51 allowing for completely different local colour to Willie of Winsbury (ib. 100). p. 19 is akin to a Scotch ballad of which I can only recall a scrap: —

*Twas late at e'en and the bairnies grat
The mither under the moul's heard that
She too takes them into her grave.*

Sofia, 1944

Elizabeth Marriage Mincoff

„**Y**ou marry me, mother, betroth me;
Mother you never have asked me
Whether I wish to be married.
There is a dragon that loves me
Loves me and wishes to wed me.
This very night he is coming,
And when he comes he brings with him
Dragons on coalblack stallions
She-dragons in golden coaches
Their children in painted cradles.
When they pass over the forest
Down fall the trees, though no wind stirs
When over fields they are passing
Fires flame up without lighting
When they come hither this evening
The house will seem to be burning
From each of its four corners,
But do not let it afright you!“
Just as she finished speaking
Both of them heard a gun-shot
The boxwood gates flew open
The yard was full of dragons
Of she-dragons and dragons.
Said the she-dragons to Rada
„Rada, you pretty maiden
Unplait your close-woven braids
And let us plait you our fashion

Our fashion Rada, like dragons."
When they had combed and plaited
Back they got into the coaches
Fast they flew over the forest
Over the wide open country
And on the road were five waggons
Waggons with hay and with cornsheaves.
Radka said to the dragon
„Fiery flaming dragon
Can you set light to the cornsheaves
Both to the hay and the cornsheaves?"
Thus spoke the dragon to Radka
„Radka, my bonny lassie
I can set light to the cornsheaves
To the hay, Rada, I cannot.
Herbs of all kinds are among it
Melilot sweetly scented
And the singlestemmed gentian.
If I set light to the hay, dear
Then you and I shall be parted."
Radka was cunning and clever
Lighted the hay in the waggons
So got away from the dragon.
Thus spoke the dragon to Rada
„Radka, my bonny lassie
Tell me, why do you trick me
Cunningly asking me questions
Thus to befool me and leave me?"

Elena. Angeloff & Arnaoudoff p. 88

In the clear blue sky a dragon hovers
Underneath his wing a pretty maiden.
Said the pretty maiden to the dragon
„Dragon dear, now be a brother to me!
Take me back for I have left my slippers!“
„Come dont trifle with me, pretty maiden
I've a shoemaker among my brothers
He'll soon make you up a pair of slippers.“

Trun, Sbornik XXI 15

Stoyan was pasturing his lambs
Up on the hill Ireen Pileen
He lead them on and further on
Until he reached the fairies' lake
And he beheld three fairies there
Naked and bathing in the lake
And Stoyan went and took their clothes
Their shifts, their skirts their aprons too.
And the first begged and prayed Stoyan
„Give me my shirt, give me my clothes
I have no mother of my own
No mother, but a stepmother.“
So Stoyan gave her back her clothes.
The second begged and prayed Stoyan
„Give me my shirt, give me my clothes
I am a luckless orphan maid

With no one left to care for me."
So Stoyan gave her back her clothes.
And the third begged and prayed Stoyan
„Give me my shirt, give me my clothes
I am my mother's only child."
But Stoyan said „My pretty lass
Nine years I've wandered on Pireen
Looking for such an only child."
He took the fairy home with him
And she lived with him in his house
Neither a short time nor a long
Twas just a year she stayed with him
And bore Stoyan a little son.
And at the baby's christening feast
The godfather said „Radka, come
Get up and shew us how you dance
Shew how you dance and dont be shy."
And Radka answered „Godfather
Ask him to give me back my clothes
And then I'll dance and not be shy."
As soon as she put on her dress
She turned her right, she turned her left
And as she stepped upon the hearth
„Stoyan" she said „did you not know
A fairy is no housekeeper
A fairy cannot rear a child".
And at the chimney out she flew
Back to her mother and the rest.

Sbornik XXVI 254 & XII 6 № 3

There was a mother had nine sons
Petkana was her only girl.
Petkana was a woman grown
And old enough to be a bride.
A suitor sent to woo the girl.
Nine villages away he lived
Eight of her brothers said him nay
And their old mother too refused
But Lazar fain would give the girl
And to their mother thus he spoke
„Come let us let Petkana go,
What if there be nine villages
Between us and his place- the tenth
Down in that waste Zagora land?
Zagora folk are very rich.
We're a united family,
Even if we go but once a year
To visit her in her new home
It will be nine she has as guests
Petkana will get sick of us
Sick of us all and very tired.“
And so Petkana married him.
And scarcely was Petkana wed
A dark mist fell upon the land
And with the mist a fearful plague.
All of those friendly brothers died
And their nine wives at the same time
Petkana's mother, left alone
To rock nine cradles in her house

And tend nine luckless little babes
And light the candles on nine graves,
Each workday and each holiday
Watered the graves of all of them
Gave charity for their souls' sake.
And still her heart was sore for her
Petkana, for her only girl.
To Lazar's grave she would not go
Nor light the candles on his grave
Nor pour the wine upon the earth
And thus she cursed him in her grief
„Lazar! The grave give you no rest!
May you fall through it for your deed
Sending Petkana far from me
Down in that waste Zagora land
Nine villages away from us.“
Lazar the dead man prayed to God
„Help me O God! Make of my cross
A yellow wooden drinking flask*
And of my shroud a good strong horse.“
And God in pity heard his prayer
Made of his shroud a good strong horse
And of his cross a drinking flask,
So Lazar rose up from his grave
And to Petkana's house he went
And in the doorway loudly called
„Petkana, sister, quick! come out!“
Petkana at the call came out

A flattish wooden bottle of wine with a strap by which to carry it is brought when inviting guests. See also p. 24.

And when she saw him standing there
She kissed his hand and said to him
„Dear brother, brother Lazarus
What is it makes your hand so smell
„Of scalded elder and red earth?“
And Lazar said „Petkana dear
Are there not nine of us at home?
We all have built a house for each
And that is why my hand still smells
Of scalded elder and red earth.
Petkana come along with me
And I will take you visiting.“
And so Petkana started out
Behind her brother Lazarus
With him to go avisiting.
They rode and rode and on they rode
Past the green wood to the wide plain
And in the plain there stood a tree
And on the tree there sang a bird
And as it sang these words it said
„Where was it ever seen or heard
That quick and dead together ride
As Lazar and Petkana do?“
Petkana said to Lazarus
„Do you hear, brother Lazarus
What the bird sings in yonder tree?“
Lazarus answered her again
„Come sister we must hurry on
The bird is but a lying bird.“
They rode and rode and on they rode

Until they reached their hayfields and
Petkana said to Lazarus
„See brother, brother Lazarus
The hay in all the fields is cut
Only in yours it stands unmown
And Lazar answered her again
„I have been ill and could not mow“.
When to the vineyards they came on
Petkana said to Lazarus
„See, all the vineyards have been dug
And only yours is left to do.“
Lazarus answered her again
„I have been ill and could not dig.“
They rode and rode and on they rode
Until they reached the churchyard wall
And to Petkana Lazar said
„Petkana dear, go straight on home
And I will follow after you
When I have given my horse to drink
I shall o’ertake you very soon“.
Then he drew off his wedding ring
And to Petkana handed it
„If mother asks you, sister dear
Who came with you upon the road
Say ‘It was brother Lazarus’,
And should she not believe your word
Just show to her my wedding ring.“
Lazar returned unto his grave
Petkana to the house went on
And knocked upon the door and called

„Mother come out to welcome me.“
And when her mother came outside
And saw Petkana on the step
She sadly, gently asked of her
„Petkana, who has brought you here?“
Petkana to her mother said
„Mother, o dear old mother mine
My brother Lazar brought me here
And if my word you dont believe
See he has given me his ring
His wedding ring to show to you
And here it is, o mother mine.“
Then sore at heart the mother was
She caught Petkana in her arms
And in her daughter's arms she wept.
Alive they locked in their embrace
And dead they fell apart again.

Angeloff & Arnaoudoff p. 101

Lazar was pasturing the steers
About the graves of 'Rusalem
And there he climbed upon a stone
And played upon his shepherd's pipe
And from the grave the young wife heard
And from the grave she spoke to him
„Dear brother, tell me is he wed?
Has he led home another wife

And is she prettier than I,
More saving, more industrious?"
And Lazar answered „He has wed
And brought us home another bride
And she is prettier than you
More saving, more industrious,
But she neglects the little ones.
Early at dawn she leaves the house
And comes again at sunset time.
The children come to meet her then
And one will want a bit of bread
And one a drink, but she will scold
'Sweet children: never satisfied.
Always more food, always more drink:
That's how you wore your mother out."
„Dear brother, I must beg of you
To lead the children here to me
And bring the smallest in your arms."
And Lazar did as she had bid
And went and fetched the elder child
And brought the younger in his arms
And the grave opened, swallowed them.

Koprivchitsa, Sbornik XVI—XVII 94

Listen what happened a while back
In the great village of Kotel
Out at the bleachingground everyone
Spread out their linen for bleaching.
Poor little Stanka the orphan
She too was bleaching her linen
When the black Plague came and scared them.
All of them snatched up their linen
Ran to their homes in a hurry.
Stanka the poor little orphan
She too snatched up her linen
Ran towards the Plague calling loudly
„Plague, o black Plague, please take me first
I am a poor little orphan
No one is left of my people
O Plague, neither father nor mother.“
But the Plague answered poor Stanka.
„Stanka you poor little orphan
Wait while I look in my notebook
See if your name is inside it.“
When she had looked in the notebook
„Stanka“ she said „little orphan
You are not down in the notebook
cannot possibly take you.“
So she passed on through the village.

Northern Dobrudja, Sbornik XXXV 112

Late last evening at the fountain
To the lads and to the lasses
Boasted thus the young girl's mother:
„I've a little girl, so pretty
Brighter than the sun her beauty.“
And the sun heard and he answered
„Come bring out your little daughter
Bring her here, we'll make a wager
And we'll stake great stakes upon it
We will shine, the two together.
If the little girl shines brighter
Let her take my fine horse from me,
But if I should shine the brighter
I will take your little daughter.“
They set out to shine together
And they shone against each other
And the sun shone on the whole world
On the world and on the mountains
But the little lassie could not
And her face turned white as snowdrifts
Like the drifts along the hedgerows
For the glorious sun outshone her.

Razgrad, Boncheff no 118

Once a troupe of young men started
Started singing Christmas carols
On the way they met God's Mother
And she summoned them to table
And she said „Come eat and drink, waits.
When you rise you'll sing a new song
Sing a new song, Christmas carol
While the woods and waters listen
And the songbirds in the forest
And the fishes in the water.“
So the waits sat down and feasted
Ate and drank, when they had risen
Sang a new song, Christmas carol
Woods and waters both kept silence
And the songbirds in the forest
And the fishes in the water
While they listened to the singing
Of the new song, Christmas carol.
But one tree would not keep silent
Twas the aspen, and God's Mother
Cursed it saying „O thou aspen
Dost not listen to the singing
Of the new song, Christmas carol,
And from now henceforth for ever
Thou shalt tremble when the wind blows
Tremble too when all is quiet.“
That is why the aspen trembles
With the wind and in the stillness.

Varna, Sbornik VIII 24

Marco one day said to his wife
„Why are you not so pretty now
As the first year that we were wed,
The first year and the second year?“
„Dear Marco, what do you expect
With all the work I have to do
So many people on the farm
The shepherds and the goatherds too
The cowmen, wanting flour and food.
That's why I have grown plain my dear
With the hard work I have to do
And if I do not please you dear
Just take another wife as well
Another wife, a prettier
Together we will share the work.“
Daphina spoke the words in jest
But Marco took them seriously.
Into the storehouses he went
And took there wooden flasks for wine*
Filled them and sent them straight away
To Lovetch to the Bishop there
To Pleven to his godfather
To pretty Ielka at Sofia
To bid them to the wedding feast.
So a great wedding was prepared
And many went to meet the bride.
Daphina in the garden sat
Bitterly weeping mid the flowers
„Dear little sisters, flowers“ she said

„All sown and still not planted out
Your sister had no time for you.“
But Marco's mother said to her
„Pretty Daphina come and wash
And plait your hair and do it well
And change into your wedding dress
And put your prettiest trinkets on
For we must meet the wedding guests.
And when they come, go greet them well
That everybody may be pleased
And lead their horses to the stall
And kiss the hands of all the guests
And Marco's and his bride's as well.“
Daphina did as she was told
And Ielka said „O Marco dear
Who is the pretty bride I see?
Your sister or your brother's wife
Or cousin that she is so pleased?“
And Marco answered Ielka „No
Daphina 'tis, whom I divorce.“
And Ielka said „O Marco dear
How beautiful Daphina is
Yet she no longer pleases you
And how can I expect to please?
I too shall not be good enough
And you'll divorce me in my turn.“
And turning to the wedding guests
„Godfathers, groomsmen all“ she said
„Tis time to stop this wedding feast
You'd better take me back again

To where it was we started from.
Daphina was not good enough
And how am I to set about
To please a man like Marco here?"

* See note p. 16.

Teteven, Sbornik XXXI 213

Demo, Demo, wild young Demo
Fell in love with our Elena
Our Elena, the priest's daughter.
Three years and a half they courted
Till her mother heard about it
And her mother was against it
And at once she stopped Elena
Going with the girls to dancing
With the young brides to the fountain
With the boys to evening parties
Songs and fairy tales and spinning.
Demo then was sadly puzzled
What to do and how to manage
For his love to come and meet him.
So he built a handsome fountain
At the entrance to the village
And the conduits were of marble
And the pipes were made of silver
And the mouths of them were gilded.
Everybody went to see it

But her mother would not let her
Said „Stay here, dont go Elena
It is only done to tempt you
Just to tempt you and befool you.“
Demo wondered how to manage
That his love should come and meet him,
In the middle of the village
Built a church and roofed it grandly
Covering the walls with marble
And the ikons were all silver
And the lamps were silver gilded.
Everybody went to see it
But her mother would not let her.
So he laid him down and died there
And Elaine said to her mother
„Mother, mother, dearest mother
While alive I might not see him
Let me go now to the funeral.“
And her mother answered „Go now
Take him flowers for his coffin.“
So Elena took two candles
And she went into the garden
There she gathered yellow flowers
Yellow flowers and sweet basil
Loosed her hair down to her ankles
Raised her voice aloud in weeping.
To the church she went to Demo
And she decked him and bewept him
„Demo, Demo, wild young Demo
While alive you might not see me

Now you see me at your funeral."
Demo stood up calling loudly
„All you priests and all you deacons
Who were singing for the funeral
Let us turn it to a wedding:
Marry Demo and Elena."

Mustafa Pasha, Sbornik 1909 p. 55

Brothers three were building a castle
Each day they built it up in the sunlight
Each night it fell under the moonlight.
Then the brothers took council together
„Whichever of our wives comes first
Early at morn bringing the breakfast
Her we will bury in the foundations."
Each of them warned his wife of the matter
Only to Struna her husband said nothing
All that he said was „Struna, oh Struna
Early tomorrow when you get up dear
First bathe the baby, swaddle and nurse him
Feed him and rock him, lull him to sleep.
Then bake the bread and wash the white linen
After all that you will cook me my breakfast
And bring it hither to the white castle."
Struna arose very early next morning
Did all the things her husband had told her

Got him his breakfast, cooked it and brought it
When her love saw her, down bowed his head
Down bowed his head, she saw he was crying.
Gently spoke to him Struna his wife
„Why my love do you hang down your head
Why hang your head, and why are you crying?“
„Oh Struna, Struna, my ring has fallen
My silver ring with the red stone in it
Fallen down here into the foundations.“
„Dearest, Struna will leap down and find it.“
Struna leapt down into the foundations
Seeking the ring with the red stone in it
Her uncles and her husband's brothers
Stone upon stone and beam on beam building
Walled Struna in into the foundations.
Struna called out „O uncles, O brothers
Leave me a place free on the right side
On the right side in the castle foundations
That I may nurse my little baby
My little baby with milk that is fresh.“

Angeloff, Crestomatia p. 154.

Milka's mother boasts of her daughter
„Never was maiden as lovely as Milka
In Constantinople or Adrianople
None is the like of our Turnovo beauty!“
Now a young Latin heard of her boasting
Hired himself carpenters wondrously skilful
Went to the forest to choose himself timber
Bade them cut planks of the finest pinewood
Build a slender swiftsailing vessel.
Merchandize bought he, trinkets for maidens
Filagree necklets and painted distaffs
Gold thread and silver, silk of the whitest.
Loud called the Latin „Come buy my fairings!“
Everyone came but beautiful Milka
See now, she comes too, beautiful Milka
One maid before her sweeping the pathway
One maid behind her holding her train up
So she came down to the swiftsailing vessel
To buy her threads both silver and golden
Silver and golden and silk of the whitest
Filagree necklets and painted distaffs.
When the young Latin saw Milka coming
By the right hand he took her and led her
Onto the ship, the swiftsailing vessel
And as they sailed he said „Pretty Milka
When grapes grow on thorns you'll return to your
mother.“

Yankoff no 255.

Turkish soldiers are marching up
Bearing with them a robber's head.
„Out all of you! and have a look
Whether you know whose head it is.“
All of them came both great and small,
None of them knew whose head it was;
Then an old woman came along
She knew the head and all too well
And to the soldiers loud she cried
„Curse on you that you killed my son!“
Whereon the Turks replied to her
„Well done old woman! Mashala! *
Well you knew how to rear your son.
Before we could come up with him
Over nine mountains must we climb,
Before his hands were safely tied
Nine of our ropes he burst in two,
Before we could cut off his head
Nine of our swords were broke and bent.
Rear other sons as good as he!“

Samokoff, oral. *Bravo (Turkish)

Hoarfrost fell right in the summer
Fell for a fortnight together
Right in the midst of the dogdays
Fell on the woods and the water
Fell on the grass of the meadows
Fell on the leaves of the forest.
In all the mountains round Sliven
One tree alone was not blighted
It was a laurel, an olive.
Under the tree there were sitting
Two hundred brigands; their leaders
Three: — Radool, Staiko and Martin.
Radool was piping and Staiko
Beating the drum while the lads danced.
Up spoke Martin, who sat watching
„Lads! We've had no luck this summer
All our clothes wearing to pieces
Nothing to buy us tobacco.
What can we do in these mountains!
Who wants to come and earn money?
White coins and even more yellow
Each of us all he can carry!
Boys, let us up and be going
Into the Karnobat mountains.“
And the rest answered him „Captain
We should all like to come with you.
How can we hope to pass Sliven
Where all the people will know us?“
„Boys we shall easily do it,

No one in Sliven will know us.
Let us find one of our number
Fit for the bride at a wedding
With a girl's face and a man's heart
Slim waist, black eyes and curved eyebrows,
Then as a bridal procession
We shall pass safely through Sliven."
When they looked everyone over
Radool was best for the purpose
And they all cried out „Martini
Radool is bride at our wedding.
Only say how shall we dress him
Wanting the veil and the bride's wreath?"
„Just see whose scarf* is the thinnest
That as a veil it may serve us
And as we're passing through Sliven
We'll buy red wreaths for the bridal."
Loud played the flutes and the bagpipes
Rub-a-dub-dub went the drummer
Great was the wedding procession.
When they were coming to Sliven
Martin said „Boys if they ask you
What is this queer kind of wedding
What has become of the women?
Just tell the people of Sliven
'What with the Turks and the brigands
Travelling is really too risky
For us men, let alone women'."
So then they marched into Sliven
Bought the wreath, decked the bride with it.

Nobody knew them in Sliven;
Even in passing the konak
Though it was crowded with soldiers
Nobody there would have known them
But at the gate of the konak
Sat a black rogue of a negro,
He went and said to the Pasha
„This is no wedding procession!
Brigands they are from the Balkan
Come from the mountains round Sliven.“
Then to his men said the Pasha
„Go, stop the wedding procession!
Bring me the bride.“ So they brought them
But the bride made no obeisance.
Whereon the Pasha grew angry
„Well if your bride has no manners
Maybe your wheat can bow for her.“**
And Martin answered the Pasha
„To us the bride makes obeisance
To a Turk'tis not permitted.“
Then in a fury the Pasha
Called „Fetch the keys of the prison
Lock them all into the dungeon.“
This time Radool lost his temper
Drew out his sword from his furcoat
Slew the guard, dashed to the courtyard
Thrust his sword out to the left side
When he had turned to the right side
All of the soldiers had fallen
And from above called the Pasha

„Quick! Let the gates be thrown open!
The bride had better be going!“

1872, Sbornik XXVI 36.

* Scarf, the long kummerbund round a man's waist.

** A threat to trample down the crops.

„Donka go ask of your mother
If I may have you in marriage
Although I be a comita.“*
„Hark to the wild, foolish fellow!
Comitas do not have houses,
Comitas dont bring up children;
The mountain's the house of the brigand
His wife is a slim Russian rifle
His cartridges, they are his children.“

Prilep, Sbornik XV 54.

* A brigand, derived from „Committee“!

Autumn is come and the hoarfrost is falling
Hoarfrost is falling, the leaves seared and withered
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

All the leaves are seared in the forest
Seared and fallen, leaving the trees bare
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Long enough we've marched hither and thither
Hither and thither through the green forest
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Long enough we've been eating and drinking
Fat lambs, red wine and fiery brandy
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Long enough we have carried our rifles
Rifles and swords and braces of pistols
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Through the forest our fathers are going
Through the forest asking for news of us
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

From house to house our mothers are going
Through the village asking for news of us
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

To the sedianki* our sisters are going
To the sedianki asking for news of us
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Round the village our children wander
Naked and barefoot, they too are calling
Furl the flag captain, let us be going.

Gabrovo 1872. Sbornik XXVI 46.

* Evening working parties.

Tell me, tell me robber chieftain
Tell me: Shall I cut your hand off?

Your robber's hand?

„Cut it, cut it Sergeant major
Since it could not hold the gun straight.“

The troup's dispersed.

Tell me, tell me robber chieftain
Tell me shall I put your eyes out?

Your coalblack eyes?

„Take them, take them Sergeant major
Since they did not see to aim straight.“

The troup's dispersed.

Tell me, tell me robber chieftain
Tell me shall I cut your head off

Your robber's head?

„Cut it off O Sergeant major
Since it lacked the wit to rout you.“

The troup's dispersed.

Akhur Chelebisko, Sbornik II 137.

Stancho to Stanka said one day
„Stanka, you pretty slender girl
My pretty one, my little bride
Go in your little garden, dear,
Pick me a nosegay of your flowers
Sweet basil, darkeyed marigold

And double yellow hollyhock."
And as she picked, up spoke his horse
„Stop pretty Stanka! pick no flowers
Dont give him any nosegay pray.
We came here through nine villages
We met nine girls upon the road
With all the nine we fell in love
And you will be the tenth , my girl."
Stanka grew vexed and 'stead of flowers
Threw nettles out across the hedge
And into Stancho's shirt they fell
And burnt his chest, and Stancho said
„My little horse, just you look out
Next time we go a-marketing!
For I shall load you up old boy
With sixty okas* of white rice
And mount you on the top of that
Then I shall ask you how you like
The load you feel upon your back
Whether it weighs upon your back
As the girl weighs upon my heart."

Elena, Sbornik XXVII 286.

* Old fashioned weight = $1\frac{1}{4}$ kilos.

The ram with the horns O so sadly is bleating
„O dear, O dear! I take God to my witness
All of the time till the shepherd was married
I cropped the grass on the high mountain pasture
Lay in the shadow under the ashtrees
Drinking the water straight from the sources
Licking the salt that was put for me ready.
But woe's the day! Since the shepherd is married
I must find pasture among the rubbish
Drinking the water out of the puddles
Taking the salt wherever I find it.“

Deber, Ikonomoff no 36.

Tortoise went one day a-ploughing
Started with a mouse to lead him
And a frog to do the driving.
So they went along the highway
Till they came upon a hedgehog.
Out he stuck his spines, the creature,
And ripped up the frog's blue tunic.
Lady Frog was very angry,
Went at once before the Cadi,
Said „O Cadi, O Effendi
You sit crooked, but judge straightly!
I was walking on the highway
On my way to do the ploughing

With a mouse to do the leading.
On the road I met a hedgehog.
Out went all the spines upon him
And he tore my new blue tunic."
Said the Judge „Egad Miss Froggy!
You're a girl, stay home in safety;
He's a boy, that's why he does so."

Samokoff, Shapkareff I 1217.

Mother Crayfish went upon a journey
Seeking someone for her son to marry
Seeking him a bride down in the valley.
Hindmost, foremost, wandered Mother Crayfish
Till among the croaking frogs one pleased her,
Yellow legged she was and creamy breasted.
She refused the crayfish and his whiskers.
„How could I sew drawers to fit the bridegroom?
Twelve legs to the pair is far too many."

Gorna Orechovitza, Sbornik XXVI 380.

* Among the many wedding gifts the bride has to prepare
is underlinen for the groom.

Mrs Fox was left a widow
With twelve cubs, six male, six female.
One day she sat down to comb them
As she combed them she was crying
„O what will become of you dears
And how can your mother rear you?“
But the smallest fox cub answered
She the smallest and the cleverest
„We'll go to Constantinople
To Constantinople market
Round the necks of wealthy people
On the purses of poor people.“

Turnovo, Sbornik X 107

Get up all you hens! Begin dancing
For today is the old rooster's wedding,
We shall find him an old hen to marry.
But the rooster has quite lost his temper
Says he wont take the old hen we offer
He is set upon marrying a pullet.

Deber, Shapkareff no 1240.

Called aloud the green and early basil
 „Health to lads I wish, and health to lasses
 Let them come and pick me green and growing.“
 And the meadow cranesbill heard him speaking
 „How you talk you green and early basil!
 Just a month or two you keep your greenness
 Autumn comes, the hoarfrost sears your beauty.
 I keep green in winter and in summer
 In the winter under the white snowdrifts
 In the summer in the shady places.“
 Answered him the green and early basil
 „You are green in winter and in summer
 Just a month or two I keep my greenness
 But without me who can go to church, pray?
 And without me not a bride is married
 And without me not a child is christened.“

Yankoff 182.

„Much health“ is the usual salutation answering to „kind regards to“. Basil is used for sprinkling holy water; cranesbill is planted in every garden for the sake of its green leaves and aromatic scent, and is called zdravets = health. Perhaps it is this usurpation of his own personal name that stings the cranesbill to retort.

From the meadow cried the Autumn crocus
 Till they heard him in the next field plainly
 „I congratulate you, clever iris:
 For your mother reared you very wisely
 In the Spring she taught you how to blossom

For the girls and brides to pluck and wear you
But poor me! I grew up so neglected
No one but a stepmother to rear me
And she taught me how to flower in Autumn
For the horses with their hooves to pick me
For the pigs to root me out with gruntings
For the hoar frost and the cold to wither."

Trun, Sbornik XXII 38.

Rada and Stoyan were lovers
For a year and more in secret
And they said to one another
„No one knows a thing about it."
And the sun arranged the business
Twas the moon that spoiled the matter
And she said to Stoyan „Stoyan
You're in love, you silly fellow
You're in love and lying about it
But how are you to get married?
For you are such near relations
Near relations, second cousins.
Can you really think, Stoyanë
No one knows a thing about it?
In the forest all the leaves know
In the meadow all the grass knows
By the sea the very sand knows
And the stars know in the heavens."

Yankoff no 92.

Stara Planina is bitterly weeping
Pirin Planina asked her politely
„Why are you crying Stara Planina?“
„How can I help it Pirin Planina?“
Not a year passes but there come brigands
(This year they're far more) and the young shepherds
With their grey flocks come eating my grass up
Drinking my water, roasting their black lambs
Burning my tall trees in the green forest.
Broad is the leafage, thick is the shadow
And in the shadow cool is the water,
Perched on the branches nightingales singing
As they are singing they keep on saying
„Plague take the brigands, plague take the shepherds
They've burned the forest, the dark green forest
Trees, they stood high once, leaves spread so broadly
Now we no longer can sing our carols.“

Akhur Chelebisko, Sbornik III 78.

Stoyan sat alone in the tavern
Drinking red wine and while drinking
Turning his eyes to the mountain
Thus to the mountain broke silence.
„Mountain oh Murgash mountain
Fair art thou Murgash and goodly
For flocks, for passing the winter,
Best of all art thou for pasture.

Why dost thou do me this damage?
Not a year passes oh Murgash
But you take one of my shepherds
And this year two you have taken
Two of them, flute players* both."
Murgash always is silent
Says not a word to any
Yet to Stoyan he answered
„Stoyan, oh man of mettle
I do not take your shepherds
But on my heights there are skrees
Skrees and blue stones upon them
Among the stones lives the viper
She it is takes thy shepherds
Them and their flutes together."

Angeloff p. 153.

* The Kaval is really more like recorder or flageolet, a thick wooden pipe blown vertically.

Three sisters ran for a wager
Three sisters who were three rivers
Arda Maritsa and Toondja
Three days they ran, three nights also
And they said one to another
„Come, let us halt here and rest us
Lie down and sleep for a little
And the first sister who wakens

Will call the others for starting
So that we all start together
Then we shall see who is victor."
So they lay down for a little
Rested and slept, but the Toondja
(She was the youngest) waked early
And did not wake up the others
But started off on her journey
And when the Arda awakened
„Sister“ she said to Maritsa
„Get up, for Toondja has started.“
Maritsa said „Sister Arda
May the Lord cause sister Toondja
To flow with noise and with gurglings
Tearing the forests and mountains
Smoothing the road for us ready
For us who coming behind her
Will overtake her and pass her.“
God heard the prayer, it was granted
And from that day forth the Toondja
Flows with a noise and with gurgling
Making a path for her sisters:
They overtake her and pass her.

Sliven, Karaveloff Transactions no 9.

Water so cool and like cristal
Something I'm going to ask you
Something I want you to tell me
What is it pleases you best- say?
„O Bey, the blackeyed girls please me
When with their white hands they lift me
Carry me on their slim shoulders
Take me home with them and warm me
That I may wash their bright trousers
When they have got a bit dirty
In the long nights of the Winter
In the long days of the Summer.“

Akhur Chelebisko, Sbornik V 33.

Note how the Pomak song retains the Turkish courtesy title and alludes to the baggy trousers of the Mohammedan women; the Pomaks, a pure Bulgarian race in the Rhodope Mts have for centuries been Mohammedan.

From the spring, my lass, the water gushes
And the young girl comes to fill her buckets
Sees herself reflected in the water
Says to it „O water, O clear water
See how red and white I am, O water:
If my eyes were black as well, O water
I should set the whole round world afire
Both the married and unmarried people
Most of all those who are newly married!

And the bachelors wore out their girdles
Pulled them tight to make their waists look slimmer
Married men left wives and little children
Widowers tugged out their fine moustaches
The betrothed returned their rings, O water
And the old men shaved off all their beards."

Veles, Sbornik X 35.

Lalka dear, listen pretty one!
And dont come walking past our house
And do not clatter with your shoes
Upon the pavement of our yard
To tease the watchdog on his chain
And plague the boy. Though he's betrothed
In the next village to a girl
Whose people are so very grand
It's Lalka he is wild about.
On Saturday he goes to dance
On Sunday morning goes to plough
And all the morning ploughs and sings
Is crazy all the afternoon
Waiting to see the sun go down
So he can pass by Lalka's house
To get a chance of seeing her
And hear her sing. What was't she sang?
„O mother if girls only knew:
If they but knew they wouldnt wed

For like a hollyhock in bloom
The girl is in her mother's house;
And like the fennel in the field
The young bride fades with her „in laws“
Father in law, mother in law
Sisters in law married or no
And all her husbands brothers too
And most of all from her first love.“

Koprivchitsa, Sbornik XIV 14.

Mother dear, do you, remember
In the brave days e'er I married
What handsome clothing I wore then
What a sleek horse twas I rode then
With a long gun on my shoulder
Two pistols stuck in my girdle?
O if you only knew, mother!
As I passed by on the roadway
How all the girls would be looking,
How they would say to each other
„Lucky the girl that he marries!“
And the brides said to each other
„Lucky his wife when he's married!“
How the old women would stare too
How they said one to another
„Happy the mother that bore him!“
Bachelor life is a pasha's

Like a vizier is a spinster.
But since I'm plighted and married
My horse has forgotten his neighing
And my long rifle is rusty
And my fine clothes worn to pieces.
Bachelor life is a pasha's!

s. I. Karaveloff, Pamiatniki I 222.

Sava son, why does the Pasha threaten
Wheresoe'er he finds you he will kill you?
„Well my mother, well my dear old mother
Tis no wonder that he wants to kill me.
Last night I was coming from the tavern
Starting home; a girl came from the hot baths
And we met there in the narrow alley.
Now God smite the button of my gaiter!
It entangled in the lass'es trousers.
As I stooped down to undo the button
May God smite the button, of my waistcoat!
It entangled in the lass'es necklace
And it broke the necklace and the pearls fell.
As I stooped to gather all the pearls up
And the yellow florins that were scattered
May God smite my tiresome moustaches!
They entangled in the lass'es side curls.
That is why of course the Pasha threatens
He will kill me wheresoe'er he finds me“.

Miladinoff no 440

Yanka is such a pretty lass.
Yanka was standing at the gate
And saw the Cadi passing by
Behind him came his officers
Leading a young man prisoner
His white hands fast behind his back
With heavy fetters. Yanka said
„Why do you take him prisoner?“
„O Yanka, O you pretty lass
Because the fellow kissed a girl.“
„O Cadi, wise old gentleman
Let youth become a law to you:
Whenever two old people meet
Cross looks are all that they exchange
Whenever two young people meet
What is it you would have them do?“

quoted by Pencho Slaveikoff, *Periodichisko Spisania* 1902 LXII 15

My horse, bay beauty of a horse
Lift your head higher as we go
And drop into a gentle trot
For we must go, my little horse
Right through the streets of Pashmakli
Past the townhall of Raikovo
Through Oostok market on our way.
When we near Lower Raikovo

Step higher as you trot along
And raise your head again and neigh
Strike out a bit and paw the ground.
My sweetheart lives in Raikovo
Wooed and not won, loved, not yet mine.
Perhaps, my horse, she may come out
To the bay window up above
Upon the many-coloured seat
Behind the screen of turner's work
And see us both as we pass by.
Then I will feed you, little horse
On the white wheat of Fidabey
And give you Island wine to drink.

Akhur Chelebisko, Sbornik I 33

Townhall for *konak* the residence of the pasha, which has now lost its meaning.

Island wine from the Archipelago is brought back to this district by the tailors and clothmerchants who trade with the islands.

Musharabi seems an unknown word, the text has „close woven cages“ but in old Bulgarian houses the windows, especially the bow windows, are often screened with prettily turned woodwork gratings. Among the Pomaks, who are Mohammedan, these are probably still more frequent.

„**F**riend and kinsman Ivan!
Do not watch the lassie
At the dance on Sunday
In her clean white clothing
With her hair fine plaited;

For her mother washed her
Snow white shift, her sister
Combed her hair and plaited.
Go and watch the lassie
See about her reaping
See what sheaves she binds there
Does she lead the reapers?
Is she in the middle
Does she drag behind them?"
So Ivan decided
He would pasture cattle
Just to get a chance to
See the lassie working
See about her reaping
See about her binding.
And Ivan soon found her
Where the shade was thickest
But she was not reaping
And she was not binding
There she sat attending
To her brother's baby
With her foot she rocked him
Singing „Go to sleep dear
So Mamma can reap a
Double row, my darling
One of them for Mummy
One of them for Aunty."

1872, Sbornik XXVI 416

We are starting early, early in the morning
Through the wood to seek a bride in the next village
But you listen sonny, what I'm going to tell you
Mind now, when you enter in the lasses courtyard
Do not notice if the house is big or little
Just look out and see boy, what about the sweeping.
Do not pay attention to the lasses clothing
To her sleeve embroideries, necklaces and earrings
All the whole collection costs but a few shillings.*
But take heed and find out if she has a memory
That is worth a fortune and is never finished.

Miladinoff no 328

* Literally „Grosh“ twopences. In his moral fervour he grossly underestimates the value of a peasant dress. With all its belongings it easily costs £ 5. and is of very lasting materials, thick felted serge, hempen linen embroidered in fine wools that keep their colour wonderfully under the fierce sunlight.

Graziers from Vratsa are travelling
Saying the one to the other
„Where shall we seek a night's lodging?
What squire's house shall we visit
That he may feed us and lodge us?“
Peter the grazier said „Graziers
Follow me on to poor Lalo's
If he is poor, his wife's courteous
And with kind words she will feed us

Give us to drink with good manners.
 She has two pretty young daughters
 They will attend us, stand by us.*
 So they rode on to poor Lalo's
 Knocked, out came Rada and opened
 Neda led off all the horses
 Taking them into the stable
 Giving them hay and green basil.*
 Into the house Rada led them
 Setting them pillows to sit on
 Took off their boots, washed their feet too
 Dried with a soft cotton towel.*
 Then a hot supper* was ready
 Plenty to eat and to drink too.
 At morning when they were starting
 And pretty Rada came with them
 Opening the gates, Petko told her
 „Get ready Rada, I'm coming
 Saturday next for our wedding“.
 Rada said „Petko, young grazier
 Do not make fun of me, Petko
 We are poor people and simple.“

* Stand attention, „divan“, is a mark of honour to distinguished guests or older people.

* The basil is a poetic exaggeration, it is not a forage crop but a garden herb brought in here to show the good quality of the hay.

* The towel must have been very soft and fine, it was of the stuff used for turbans.

* The hot supper also was a mark of special consideration, for normally cooking was only done once a day and then for midday dinner.

Petko said „Rada, fair Rada
I am not looking for money
Rada, I'm looking for beauty
But most for courtesy, Rada
And for good sense, understanding;
You cannot buy them with money.“

Elena, Karaveloff Transactions no 66

Gladly would I stay here with you drinking,
Wine or mead would both of them be welcome
But my horse is really most unruly.
When I ride him in the level highways
He will never stay upon the highways,
Turns aside to every lassie's gateway.
And he only gets me into trouble
For I have not money for tobacco
Let alone to pay for any wedding;
I have not a shirt to bless myself with
Let alone for godfathers* for presents,
Nor a towel fit to wipe my face on
Let alone to give it to the best man.

Sbornik XIV 18

* The „Koom“ and his feminine partner the „Koomitsa“
preside at the wedding and later at the christening of the chil-
dren. Presents are given by the young couple, especially the
bride, as well as to them.

The golden apple branches swayed
And struck the young King's shoulder.
The bellman called about the town
The town of Ichtiman, O:
„Heigh! All that have fine clothes to wear
Just put them on and wear them.
The man that has a horse to ride
Had better mount and ride it
Whoever has a pretty love
Let him make love and win her
For years may come and years may change
And you be left regretting!“

Pirot, Sbornik X 45

Did you really love me as I love you
You would not be waiting for the full moon
For the moon is only meant for travellers.
Better are dark nights for two young lovers
Two young lovers such as you and me, love
Youth, my lover, does not last for ages
Youth flows by as if it were a river;
Tis old age my boy that last for ages.
And the moon is only meant for travellers
Better are dark nights for two young lovers
Two young lovers such as you and me love.

Okhrida, Sbornik V 96

O my little soul, my Yanna
Either love and love in earnest
Or else say you will not have me
Then I neednt prowl of evenings
Set the village dogs abarking.
All the village has been saying
„Who is this that goes at nightfall
Round the village? Is't a vampire
Or some young blood?“ Yanna's brothers
Said „O villagers of Metovo
Tis no vampire, a young fellow
Yanna's sweetheart.“ But they answered
„Goodness gracious Yanna's brothers !
If it's only Yanna's sweetheart
Then accept him or else kill him.
Let's have peace here in our village!“

Slaveikoff Period. Spis, LXII 17

Girl, there's one thing I shall ask you
Do not lead me on but take me
Do not drive me crazy waiting
Hanging round your house at nighttime.
All who know me think me crazy
Take me for a wolf at midnight
While I slink beneath the house eaves
With the gutters dripping on me.

Miladinoff no 446

Stoyan said „Rada, Rada dear
What is this love of yours and mine?
A love you never can forget.
When I sit down to eat my bread
The morsel sticks there in my throat
I have to leave the table, dear
To get a drink to wash it down.
And when I took the buffalos
And went out to the field to work
Still I kept wondering as I walked
Whether we really shall wed
And deep in thought I missed the way
And came to your field not to ours
And ploughed your field till dinner time
And when I looked what I had ploughed
It wasnt our field all the time
But yours. And then I prayed to God
The plough might break and I be forced
To come back in the dinner hour
So I might have to pass your house
And see you Rada, in the yard.“

Bessarabia, Yankoff p 152

Last night from the fields I came
From my digging, from the plough
Muddy, wet and tired out.
Through the village as I went
(Though 'twas not the shortest way)
In your yard I saw you work
Planting out your basil plants
And I asked a sprig of you.
But no basil would you give,
Plucked a nettle in its stead
Would not lay it in my hand
Threw it out across the hedge
And it fell into my breast,
Burned me, set me all afire.

Bolgrad, Yankoff no 160

There was a maiden
Planted a vineyard
Down by the seashore.
One day she planted,
Two days she hoed it;
And as she planted.
And as she hoed it
Still she was weeping
Weeping and singing :
„O vineyard, vineyard
Full of white muscats

Now that I plant you
Say, who will gather?
When I have no one
Father nor mother
Sister nor brother
No one is left me
Save God Almighty
God and my lover.
God's high above us
In the blue heaven
My love's afar off
Out on the Black Sea."

Teteven, Sbornik XXXI 207

Ivancho said to Irene
„Give me your hand, dear Irene
Bid me goodbye and forgive me.
We have been lovers, Irene
Twas a mistake, and a great one.
Now I am going to Sliven
Mother arranged my betrothal
And I am going to marry
A Sliven girl, fair and rosy
Slim as a wand in the garden."
„Ivancho dear" said Irene
„Now that your mother betrothes you
Marries you down there in Sliven

What has become of our talking,
All the sweet things we were saying?
Do you remember? Remember
How it began dear, between us?
Standing one day in your garden
Under the shade of the cherry
When we were picking the cherries
Dropping them into my apron
Before we finished the cherries
We were in love with each other
And I had promised, Ivancho
If Mother would not allow it
I would run off to the forest
Live with you there in the shadows
Feeding your flocks in the forest.
Tell me Ivancho, Ivancho
What has become of the promise?
Say did the torrent come rushing
Carrying the words away with it?
Did the breeze blow them away dear?
I will forgive you, God will not“.

Koprivchitsa, Sbornik XVI—XVII 81

Another version from the same district runs
„Brave words we spoke in the twilight
Down at the back of the sergemill
As we leant over the water.
Did they float off with the water?
Sink in the sand at the bottom?“

Three long yearš now, Kata, I have lain here
Yet you never came to see me, Kata
God be praised that he has brought you, Kata.
Turn the pillow, Kata, towards the window
Let me see the lake and watch the water,
Let me see the waves lap on the foreshore.
As the waves beat, Kata, so my heart beats.
Okhrida, Cheshmedjieff no 3

„Stoina, be merry, be merry!
Why are you merry no longer
As in your first year of marriage?“
Stoina said „Uncle, how can I?
Last night I went to a wedding
Carrying a torch brightly burning
I looked at all in their order
Mine was the ugliest husband.“
Still he said „Stoina, be merry!
Ugly he is — that is certain,
Only remember he's wealthy.“
„Wealth, uncle, wealth: and what is it?
Only a rotten manureheap!“
Gently her uncle said „Stoina
My wife is even more ugly.
Stoina, be merry, be merry:
Dont be depressed, my niece Stoina!“

Trun 1879, Kachanovski no 77

See the moon is shining brightly
Let us hope it goes on shining
Till I reach home, all my way home
To my wife and to the baby.
When I came the door was fastened
She had long since had her supper
Gone to bed and was asleep now
And although I wished to wake her
I was glad she should be sleeping.
So I leaped into the garden
And I picked a bunch of basil
Dipping it in the clear water
Came into the room and splashed her
On her fair face as she lay there.
And a breeze blew from the mountain
Stirred the covers as she lay there
„Do not blow, o breeze, to wake her:
I myself would rather wake her.“

Miladinoff № 590, Shapkaroff № 95 & Sbornik VI 13

„Come, mother, come, forget me now
Forget me now and cease to mourn.“
„I will forget, nor mourn my son
See from the fire I take this brand
And set it in the earth to grow
And when it roots, becomes a tree

Your mother sits there in the shade
Yes, then I will forget you dear,
Forget you then and cease to mourn."
„Come father, come, forget me now
Forget me now and cease to mourn."
„I will forget, nor mourn my son
When the white Danube has run dry
And turned into a fair green field.
Your father then will take his scythe
And cut the fine thick hay in swathes
And play upon his shepherd's pipe
Forget you dear, and cease to mourn."

Mustafa Pasha, Sbornik 1909 58

Mother took me out once
With her gathering nettles
But hoarfrost had fallen
Spoiling all the nettles
O my goodness gracious!
Sure I shall be beaten.

Mother took me out once
With her gathering mushrooms
But no rain had fallen
So I found one mushroom
And I lost the basket
O my goodness gracious!
Sure I shall be beaten.

Mother took me out once
And for snails we hunted
But no dew had fallen
Not a snail would venture
O my goodness gracious!
Sure I shall be beaten.

Yankoff no 137

Mother and daughter have quarrelled —
If it had been for a reason!
Over the shirt for the bridegroom*
That it had not been spun finely.
Mother said „Go away daughter
Long enough you have upset us
Turning the house upside down here!“
„I'm going mother, I'm going,
I'm here today but tomorrow
Tomorrow now, just about noontime
Do I not wish I could see you!
Father will come home from fieldwork
Who will unfasten the oxen?
You will begin to unyoke them
You will be thinking about me
Daughter wherever you be now
Come and unyoke me the oxen!
Then you'll be sweeping the house out
You will be thinking about me

Daughter wherever you be now
Come here and sweep me the house out!
Brother will come from the forest
You will remember me saying
Why dont you go out to meet him?"

Wedding song Seres, Verkovich no 212

* See note p. 40.

Once there was a woman
Had a horse, a daughter
Lent the horse on hire
And betrothed the daughter
Sold it altogether
And the girl was married;
Sat her down aweeping
In her little garden
Underneath the olive
„Oh my horse, my daughter
Helpmate, my Dragana
Like a jug of water
Early in the morning
Brought into the garden
Covered with a towel.
Dear why did you leave me
Leave me to my son's wife?
She's to me a helpmate
Like a jug of water

Drawn at early morning
And brought in at midday
To a stuffy chamber
Stuck among the pillows
Covered with a blanket
Served with bitter nagging."

Teteven, Sbornik XXXI p 217

Down from the hill came
Two girls from Zagora
And one was crying
The other consoled her
„Give over crying!
Is't for your lover?
One finds a lover
On the road, under it,
By the cool fountain.
A brother one finds not
On the road under it
Nor at the fountain."

Yankoff no 130

Roina sat down on her bedstead
 Swang her feet under the bedstead
 Praying „God grant me at Easter
 When I go round to see Aunty
 That she may give me a new dress
 Ready with shift, belt and kerchief
 White stockings, new yellow slippers
 Then I can go to the dancing.“
 Easter came, Roina went calling
 Went to her Aunt and said „Aunty
 Give me a shift and a new dress
 Kerchief and belt and white stockings
 Slippers to dance in the horo.“*
 Seeing her aunt pick the yoke up
 Into the street Roina hurried.
 „Get out of this, shameless hussy!
 Why dont you spin them and weave them?“
 „Didnt I spin and weave, Aunty?
 Spread it to bleach on the hedgetop
 Uncle's calf came up and tugged it
 Down it fell on him and killed him
 And Uncle took off my linen
 Just to make up for the damage.“

Gabrovo, Sbornik XV 27

* A round dance, a great cirde in which all join taking hands.
 Of course the excuse is an impudent lie. The calf really belonged to her aunt by marriage on the father's side and she is talking to her maternal aunt, but as we have nothing like the wealth of names for relationship to be found in Bulgarian, to avoid confusion I venture to assume that the uncle was alive and had a share in the calf.

At Neda's head two pigeons flutter
And at her feet there are three peacocks.
Pigeons and peacocks say to Neda
„Go home, go home now sister Neda
Go home, believe me, for there are waiting
Two flasks of wine, three invitations.“
Then Neda said „O Aunt Todora
I cant decide which one to marry
Which shall I take, Ivan or Stoyan?“
„Dont take Ivan, for he's a tailor
When he gets up he takes his yardstick
Goes to the village, sits in the houses
Sits in the houses cutting out jackets
Cutting out jackets, stares at the women.
At evening he comes, cross and worried
Says not a word and wants no talking.
Stoyans a shepherd; at early morning
He takes his stick, goes to the mountain
And snow blows round him and rain falls on him
And as he leads his flock to pasture
He waves his crook and gathers nosegays.
At night he comes back wet and muddy
He says his say, likes to be talking
„Here lass, some flowers from the mountain
Iris and pansies, I picked them for you.“

Bourgas, Sbornik IV 16

Deli Boi, Kara Boi
Ran away into Roumania
Bred sheep there and had three dogs too
Karamancha, Balabancha
And Greybitch. Some Turks were passing
Three Turks out of Anatolia
And they caught poor Deli Boi
Caught poor Deli Boi and bound him
And began to share his flock out
And divide it in three portions.
Deli Boi said „Anatolians
If you just untie my right hand
I will play my pipe to help you
Play the tune that leads the flock home.“
But he did not play the music
That would start the flock off homewards
For he played to call his dogs up.
Up they all came, growling, snarling
„Karamancha, Balabancha
Up at them and tear their throats out!
Dig their graves my bonny Greybitch!“

s. l. 1859, Rakovsky p 141

Rada, Rada, Demeriova
Dont you marry any farmer
For a weary life is farming
All day long you're out at fieldwork
Milking cows or doing cooking.
From the fields he comes at evening
Soaking to the knees and muddy
And you call him in to supper.
„Rada, Rada Demeriova
Tell me, have you washed my puttees?
See the oxgoad on my shoulder
And the hatchet in my girdle
And take care or I shall beat you.“
You had better wed a grocer
Life is easy with a grocer
Late he comes home from his business
Brings you loaves hot from the bakehouse
Loaves all hot and trout for supper
Trout for supper, wine a jugfull
He will eat and you eat with him
He will drink and you drink with him.
Yankoff no 197

Easter and Holy Week's come now
Girls are all dancing the horo*
And the boys putting the stone now
Each takes his turn but when Stoyan
Came to take his turn and put it
Up from below came his uncle
Saying „Stoyan, I dont hire you
Just for to dance with the lasses
And put the stone with the lads here.
It was for ploughing I hired you
So you can plough, though it's Easter.“
Stoyan was grieved and affronted
Shamed too in front of the others
He went straight home from the dancing
Threw off his clothes, put on others
Harnessed the buffaloes, started.
He traced one furrow, another
And then the buffaloes halted.
Stoyan said „Come, draw the plough on
Bother this tiresome ploughing!“
But they both bellowed „Stoyanë“
Master just look in the furrow.“
And when he looked in the furrow
There was a pot of gold pieces.
He went straight back and gave notice
That he was leaving his uncle
And came away to his mother
Bringing the pot of gold pieces.

Belogradchik, Marinoff III 359

* See note to p. 70.

When the harvest came the girl had got a fever
When the corn was in and everyone was feasting,
Everyone was feasting, then the girl was better,
Yes the girl was better, came and joined the dancing.
Looking towards the fields she saw the millet yellow
Turning to her mother suddenly she murmured
„Mother dearest mother! have my bed made ready
For that summer fever has again attacked me.“
Once the millet garnered, then the girl felt better.

Yankoff no 265

End o'the row come nearer .
Be a brother to me
Come a little nearer
At the end awaits me
Shadow of a walnut
Water from the well head
There one can sit down too
Sit down and get cooler
Have a drink of water
And get up one's forces
To go on a reaping.

Altimir, Sbornik XVIII 146

Dobranka to the garden went
She entered by the little gate
Before her stood an olivetree
Beneath the tree a tailor sat
And sewed a scarlet petticoat
And as he sat and sewed he said
„Just see how fine my dresses are
And all their skirts are very wide
And they are gathered at the waist
And in the back there are two seams.“

Razgrad, Sbornik VII 20

Yanna, Angelina
Red as rowanberry
Sweet as purple lilac!
Go and tell your mother
To come out and see me
Standing on the doorstep
For I want to ask her
Just one little question:
Would a basketmaker
Meet with her approval
As a son-in-law, pray?
I would weave her baskets
She can search the woods for
Blackberries to fill them,

Make them into brandy,
Dearly she can sell it,
Farthing for a drop
A thousand for a glassfull.

Yankoff no 304

Mara was sifting white flour for baking
And as she sifted Mara was praying
„O dear God let me marry a deacon
Or let him have a priest for his father
Or for his mother an old priest's widow
I am so fond of sweeping the church out!“

Belogradchik, Mladenoff no 585

Black nun, O tell me now for whom you wear
That fair pale visage?“
„I wear it, O young man, for the black earth
White mould and mildew.“
„Give it to me, black nun, give it to me
I shall be grateful
Give it to me, black nun, for the black earth
Will not say thankyou.“
„Black nun, O tell me now for whom you wear
Those coalblack eyes then?“

„I wear them, O, young man, for the black earth
White mould and mildew.“

„Give them to me, black nun, give them to me
I shall be grateful

Give them to me, black nun, for the black earth
Will not say thankyou.“

And so with „Those coalblack eyebrows“
„That snow white bosom“

Koprishtitsa, Karaveloff, Transactions no 52

There is a sedianka*
Ma wont let me go there
„Come now, lay the supper
Clear away and sweep up
Make the beds and lie down.“
And I made them, lay down
Staid till all were sleeping
Looked across the hedgetop
All the girls had gathered
And the boys beside them
And my sweetheart there too
But he was not sitting
He was standing, leaning
On his Shepherd's crook there
And the girls were saying
„Sit down lad, sit down now
Take another sweetheart!“

1859 s. 1. G. Rakovsky, Pokazalets 18

* Evening working party.

Mother bade me and forbade me
To go drinking wine of evenings
In the mornings to drink brandy.
Silly I! I did not listen
Drank, and drunk set out on horseback
On my wrist I took my falcon
Rode among the rich folk's houses
Boxwood gates stood at the corner
By the gates a little lassie
And I said Good evening to her
And she answered „Come tomorrow
Leave your horse and hawk behind you.“
Silly I! I did not listen,
Drank, and drunk I got on horse back
On my wrist I took my falcon
Rode among the rich folk's houses
Reached the gateway at the corner
But the boxwood gates were bolted
Then I stood there and I wondered
Whether I should smash the gates or
Leap the wall into the garden.
Clapped the mare's flanks with the stirrups
Leapt the wall into the garden
Threw my coat upon a peartree
Loosed the hawk in the carnations
Tied the mare up to the rosetree.
And I climbed into the loggia
Where the little lass lay sleeping
At her head an inlaid table

On the table stood a beaker
In the beaker clear cold water
In the water was a nosegay.
So I stood and hesitated
Whether I should drink the water
Take the nosegay, kiss the lassie.
For the water lasts you two hours
And the, nosegay lasts till noontide
But the love will last for ever.

Vratza, Sbornik XXII 117

„Listen, pretty blackeyed lassie!
Black as sloes your pretty eyes are
Round and full like grapes at vintage.
There is something I must ask you
You must answer me sincerely
Who is it has made you angry
Angry, surly? Father, mother?“
„No young fellow, I'm not angry
With my father, with my mother,
Nor my brothers. You're the sinner.
Such a long way you have travelled
In the heights and in the mountains
With the Anatolian army
From the place where the sun rises
Right to where it sets at nightfall;
Was there not one flower you found there
You could pluck me, you could bring me?

Then I'd say 'I have a lover
 Tis his nosegay I am wearing."
 „Lass, I found an early blossom
 To my horse's mane it reached up
 And I bent to pluck it, bring it
 But the flower said Young fellow
 If you pluck and take me with you
 Do not give me to the lasses
 For the lasses treat me badly.
 All day on their heads they wear me
 On their heads beneath their kerchiefs.
 When they come home in the evening
 Off they take me, down they throw me.
 When they get up in the morning
 In the morning on a Monday
 Picking up the brush and shovel
 Quick they sweep me up and take me
 Throw me out upon the rubbish
 Where the hens will pick me over.
 Tis the children wear me nicely
 All day on their heads they wear me
 Twixt their eyes, upon the forehead.
 When they come home in the evening
 Then they take me off and lay me
 On the eaves and all the night long
 Breezes blow on me to cool me
 And the dew falls to refresh me."

Miladinoff no 387

In this song which is widespread, it is generally the lads,
 not the children who are represented as careful of posies, trea-
 suring them no doubt as love tokens or as scalps as the case may be.

Ever since I grew a gay young bachelor
I had not gone down the little back alley.
All the little alley smelt of Sweet Basil
And it smelt beside of red and white roses.
From the North-East came fresh breezes ablowing
And they blew the gate of a garden open.
In the garden were red hollyhocks growing
Underneath the hollyhocks was a grassplot
On the grass was spread a silken prayer-carpet
On the carpet lay a soft velvet cushion
On the cushion there a sick man was lying
At his head two little lasses were sitting.

Veles, Sbornik X 37

„Little girl, cunning and clever
Pray do not pass through my courtyard
And do not rattle your buckets
You'll only give me fresh troubles
Troubles and bothersome worries.
Have I so few of my own, pray?
That I should take yours upon me?“
„Dear, do you want me to teach you?
Take them, my dear and collect them
Put them all in a silk pocket
And at St Georges*, the great day
Lead out a fine pair of oxen
Plough up your father's back garden

Sow all the troubles and worries
Sow yours and mine love together.
Then if it's columbine sprouts, dear
Certainly we shall be lovers
If it is nettles, we part dear
If it is basil we marry."
Never a columbine sprouted
Nor yet a nettle, but basil
And so the two of them married
For they were very well suited
Just like two sprays of a cowslip.

Doopnitsa, Angeloff and Arnaoudoff p 54

* St George, patron saint of Bulgaria as well as of England
has his feastday on May 6 (O. S. April 23).

Stoyanë, heigh Stoyanë!
Stoyan has set up a fountain
And round the fountain an orchard
And in the orchard are flowers
Herbs too, sweet basil and parsley
And all who came to fetch water
Gathered a nosegay to smell at
Last of them all slender Neda;
But though she poured herself water
She did not gather a nosegay.
Stoyan called to her „Fair Neda
Now you have poured yourself water
Why dont you gather a nosegay?“
„Stoyan, dont call up my troubles

Troubles, black, bitter as worm wood
How have I heart for a nosegay?
Yesterday down by the river
As my new shirt I was bleaching
I lost my sleeve." Stoyan answered
„Neda so pretty and slender
Do not wilt, lassie and wither :
I have your sleeve and I keep it
All the day long in my bosom
All the night under my pillow."
„Keep it, take care of it Stoyan
It took a year in the working
And half a year in the making."
Demir Hissar, Sbornik IV 30

Yanka was sitting down by the gateway
The little gateway under the white vine
Under the mulberry in the deep shadow
On the green grass, beside the cool water
Twisting her threads and threading her coins
Setting her stitches, letting the tears fall.
„O stitches, stitches! for whom do I sew you?
Is't for an old man or for a young man?
If it's an old man I shall unpick you
If it's a young man I'll set more stitches."
Then there passed by a gay young fellow
Tossed her an apple, a golden apple.
On her white breast it hit fair Yanka
On her white breast her white hands caught it.
Okhrida, Shapkareff no 155

Pretty Dimka's bleaching linen
 Bleaching and her feet she's washing
 At the river by the willow.
 Up the valley come some carters
 Quite a caravan of carters
 And they call aloud to Dimka
 „Dimka lass, you're bleaching linen
 Wont you give to us some linen
 Just enough to make a shirt of
 A fine shirt with white skirts to it
 White skirts reaching to the ankles?“
 Dimka answered „O you carters
 This is for my wedding presents
 Presents for the groom's relations
 And whoever marries Dimka
 He it is will get the linen.“

Koprishtitsa, Karaveloff Transac no 53

Shirts have to be long to allow for pouching over the belt. The recess formed is an indispensable pocket. They specify that the skirts are to be bleached also because the unexposed parts of shirts are generally made of coarser material.

Two girls once struck up a friendship
 Where they went, they went together
 On one frame they both embroidered
 And one dress they made together
 In one box they safely stored it

And they said „Let's both get married
And live in one house together
And be married to two brothers!“
So it happened, both were married
And both married in the same house
And were married to two brothers.

Miladinovi 406

Had I but known it that I must wed you
Bending me double I would have leaped down
Into the muddy waters of Siber
Two days and three nights they would have borne me
They would have thrown me on the King's meadow.
From my slim body there would have sprouted
A slender poplar, and the King's soldiers
Could stand beneath it. Where my gold hair caught
Green grass would shoot up and the King's stallions
Would pasture on it.
From my black eyes gush two clear cold fountains
For the King's soldiers to drink the water
And my white breasts be two small hillocks
And the King's soldiers would camp upon them

Orekhovitza 1872, Sbornik XXVI 208

There's a heavy dew been falling
In our godfather's smooth courtyards
And the fine green grass is sprouting
And the peacock feeds upon it.
How his tail-feathers are falling!
Godmother* picks up the feathers
Weaves two crowns to serve at weddings
She will marry two young people.

Plovdiv, Sbornik X 57

* See note p. 57.

In the wood a bird is singing
And like this the wood rechoes:
„If you have a son to marry
Better hurry up the wedding
While the girls are not expensive-
For a time of dearth is coming
When a dark girl costs a thousand
And a fair face costs two thousand
And a warm heart costs three thousand.
But the boys are very cheap now
And a warm heart can be purchased
For a truss of straw, they tell me.
If the straw were only decent!
But tis rye-straw, nothing better.
And a blackeyed boy is worth a

Truss of hay, and what poor hay too !
Marsh grass you might almost call it.
And a fairfaced boy is worth a
Truss of weeds, what wretched weeds too !
Grandma threw them on the rubbish
And the hens have picked them over."

Trun, Sbornik XXII 28

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